

# ASSOCIATION OF OREGON COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS

Addictions • Mental Health • Developmental Disabilities

Cherryl Ramirez Executive Director [cramirez@aocweb.org](mailto:cramirez@aocweb.org)  
Jessica van Diepen Data & Communications [jvandiepen@aocweb.org](mailto:jvandiepen@aocweb.org)  
Diana L. Bronson Executive Assistant [dbronson@aocweb.org](mailto:dbronson@aocweb.org)  
Andrew J. Smith Legislative Liaison [asmith@aocweb.org](mailto:asmith@aocweb.org)  
Sarah Jane Owens Develop. Disabilities Spec. [sjowens@aocweb.org](mailto:sjowens@aocweb.org)



D. Greg Schneider, President  
Lifeways, Inc.  
Malheur and Umatilla

Rod Calkins, 1st Vice President  
Marion County Health Department

Roland Migchielsen, 2nd Vice President  
Columbia Community Mental Health

Kimberly Lindsay, Treasurer  
Community Counseling Solutions  
Grant, Morrow, Wheeler & Gilliam

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Developmental Disabilities Division

Yamhill County Health and Human Services

February 8, 2012

To: Members of the House Committee on  
Consumer Protection

From: Andy Smith, Legislative Liaison, AOCMHP

**Subject: Testimony in Support of HB 4091**

MEASURE: HB 4091  
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SUBMITTED BY: Andy Smith

Good afternoon Co-Chair Whisnant and Co-Chair Holvey and members of the Committee.

For the record my name is Andy Smith. I am testifying today on behalf of the Association of Oregon Community Mental Health Programs (AOCMHP). AOCMHP membership is comprised of Mental Health Directors from Oregon's 36 Counties, nine Mental Health Organizations and one Tribe. Across the state, our members manage and connect services for individuals and families with mental health, addictions and developmental disabilities needs.

**AOCMHP strongly supports HB 4091.**

To begin, we want to acknowledge the leadership and determination of Representative Nathanson in continuing to raise the bar for efficiency and accountability as we work to improve human services for Oregonians. This bill is only one of many efforts she has undertaken over recent years and we applaud her for her work.

We want to highlight and support four basic themes contained in the bill:

**Timeliness:** The ability to complete criminal background checks in a reasonable period of time will result in increased capacity to deliver services.

**Ease of Application:** There can be a simplification of the forms involved and of the application process generally. This would not only reduce administrative costs, but will also likely reduce errors and enhance safety.

**Transferability/Portability:** Once a criminal background check is completed, it should not have to be repeated unnecessarily. Clear standards can be set that keep individuals safe and allow us to connect and coordinate workforce capacity across agencies.

**Coordination of Limited Resources:** Agencies simply don't have the resources to be conducting redundant criminal background checks. This bill will challenge the status quo and hopefully lead to more innovation in how this work is done.

**Task Force and Consumer Safety:** Background checks should first and foremost be about ensuring the safety and well being of consumers and general public. The Task Force element of the bill will ensure that any recommended changes to the background check process will be thoroughly reviewed and vetted by consumers, family members, advocates and the public.

On a daily basis, communities across Oregon are working to support individuals and families who are leading lives of recovery as they cope with mental illness and addictions. Our local mental health systems are key partners in this work.

HB 4091 would help coordinate and maximize the capacity we have to serve people who have mental health, addictions and developmental disabilities needs.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 4091.

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